

All State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Call

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Operator: Please stand by; your scheduled webinar will begin soon. We appreciate your patience.

Today's conference will begin momentarily. Until a time you will be placed on music hold. Thank you for your patience.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for standing by and welcome to the all vocational rehabilitation conference call. During the presentation all participants will be in listen only mode. Afterwards we will conduct a question and answer session. At that time if you have a question please press the star followed by 1 on your telephone. If you need to reach an operator at any time please press star zero. As a reminder this conference is being recorded June 14, 2016. I will now turn today's conference over to Nate Arnold. Please go ahead, sir.

Nate Arnold: Thank you very much, operator. Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you for joining us this afternoon. Hope your summer is getting off to a pleasant start.

We have a pretty full agenda, I'm sure you can tell by looking at it. And the first thing on the agenda is 301 medical cases.

We have had a number of questions come in to the help desk recently concerning 301 cases, even though it's something we don't see a lot of. Even here in ordez we realized we didn't have a comprehensive understanding of how the process worked. So we needed to reach out to some of the other players in the process.

To give you a little background on 301 claims, for those of you who aren't familiar with them at all or haven't seen one, section 301 of the social security act enables disability beneficiaries to continue receiving payments following a medical cessation. Since we started having electronic case openings by VR's, we have i think a lot less of these cases than we used to. It's probably primarily the ones you get now are when they undergo an age 18 redetermination for ssi beneficiaries or somebody who failed TPR for some reason or what not and they are still going to have a CDR

But if that person who has the cessation is receiving services through a VR agency, an employment network, or some other appropriate service provider like they have a pass or an educational IEP, if they began receiving those services before the month their disability has ceased and if SSA determines that completion of the program that they're in will increase the likelihood the beneficiary will not return to the rolls, then they become what we call an official 3301 -- 301 case. The part we will talk a little bit about, some of the nuances of that is truly the back end of the 301 process. You will see that through this discussion.

By the time we become aware it's a 301 case, many other components in SSA have already been involved with it -- field offices, DDS and our own office of disability operations. So I thought we would start this by giving you an overview of that whole process and grateful to our counterparts over in the office of disability operations who have agreed to provide you with a PowerPoint which will really, I think, greatly increase your understanding of what goes on before it gets to the point that we're actually going to be filing a claim on it.

With us today we have Nathaniel Williams, John France and Alice alexander from the office of disability operations. They are going to walk you through the whole operational piece of this and after that I will get back on here and we will talk a little bit about the actual disbursement piece.

Nathaniel Williams:

Hello, everyone, Nathaniel Williams, office of disability operations prepared a PowerPoint presentation on ODOs procedures for processing 301 cases.

Page 2, the section 301 process starts off in the field offices and they are the point of contact for the state vocational rehabilitation VR services. The field offices will identify the case involving participation in the VR for some of the programs as part of the medical continuing disability review, cdr process. The field office will know at a time the records of cases involving participation in the VR for some of the programs with the following remarks: potential 301 case sent to DDS on a specific date. They will annotate the date they send it to DDS. Field office will route the case to the DDS for medical determination.

Page 3, after the DDS makes the medical determination, DDS will notify the field office of that medical cessation through the electronic disability collect system known as edcs action page with the following message: cdr cessation added. Potential 301 benefit con-



tinuation. The DDS notates there is a potential medical by putting a y on the 832 or 833 in the case field of that document.

page 4, the field offices will use the developmental participation in a vocation or similar program form, known as the ssa4290 to determine any participation in the VR for some of the programs for potential entitlement to section 301 benefits. After the section 301 development is completed, the field offices will transmit the case to ODO by faxing the potential section 301 case flag to ODO's paperless processing center, using the following fax number there on page 4.

Page 5. SSA will continue to pay benefits for a specified time period, even though the person's disability has been determined no longer disanald by DDS. If the person is actively participating in a VR or similar program. ODO will make the initial section 301 determination as to whether the individual completion of the VR program or continuation in the program for a specified period of time will increase the likelihood that the individual will not return to the disability or blindness rolls.

page 6. ODO will take the following action immediately upon receipt of a potential section 301 case from the field case. For title ii cases, ODO will first check the MBR, the master beneficiary record, for a special message in the special message field for the section 301 remarks. If there are no remarks, ODO will annotate the remarks on the MBR in the special message field. Those remarks will state: section 301 determination pending. Do not take action on the medical cessation and will give you a date.

Page 7. For title 16 cases, ODO checks the SSR records for section 301 remarks and the vocational rehabilitation plan VP diary. If there are no rehashes or VP diary present, ODO will fax a request to the office to input the remarks to the SSR record.

Page 8. ODO reviews the ssa4290 and development obtained by the field office to verify that the beneficiary is participating in the VR or similar program that meets the definition of an appropriate program of VR services.

Page 9. Once ODO makes the section 301 determination, ODO will take the following actions for all section 301 cases. ODO will document the section 301 determination on a special determination form, ssa553. ODO will also prepare and send a notice of allowance or denial of the section 301 payment continuation to the beneficiary. Then ODO will complete a web-based section 301 data base. It's important to know the functionality of the web based section 301 data base is limited and it does not allow for data to be

pulled for specific states. In addition, ODO does not maintain that data.

Page 10. The title 16 section 301 cases, ODO takes the following action after making a section 301 determination. ODO will create a modernized development worksheet known as the IDW and faxes the section 301 flag to the servicing field office for instructions to annotate the section 301 determination to the SSR record remarks field and establish or update the vocational rehabilitation plan VP diary on the SSR records.

Page 11. For title ii section 301 cases, ODO takes the following actions after making a 301 determination. ODO will post the section 301 determination to the control file known as the DCF and create a one-year diary from the current month to review the section 301 allowance cases. Note: if the beneficiary completes the VR or similar program before the one year diary matures, the VR or similar program will contact the field office who will notify ODO by completing a report of con fact form known as the ssa5002.

That's page 12. This beneficiary is participating in a state VR agency program. The state VR agency may be eligible for VR reimbursement under certain circumstances. Therefore ODO will fax a copy of the ssa4290, a copy of the ssa553 special determination of the section 301, and ssa833 and/or 832 to ordes VR claims processing unit, gives the fax number and to make it attention to the 301 processing unit. Note: ODO does not send any section 301 section annual or determination notices to the state VR agency.

Page 13. ODO has automated the process for mature section 301 BP diaries, title 16 cases, to help expedite the review and processing of section 301 actions. The mature BP diary directly into ODO's paperless processing system for review. The field offices may monitor to ensure that the matured section 301 advice VP diaries are reviewed and may be sent any inquiry to the operations support branch at the phone number listed to the attention of the 301 analyst.

all right, that's the end. That concludes ODO's processing procedures for section 301 cases. We hope that you enjoyed the presentation on the ODO section 301 process.

Nate Arnold:

Thank you very much, Nathaniel.

Nathaniel Williams:

Quite welcome.

Nate Arnold:

Most, I'm sure from the VR standpoint you folks really don't need to be obviously that aware of all the behind the scenes mack nations



that go on in the process, but i think it's helpful to understand how it goes down and what the overall flow of communication is.

The initial notification and all of the communication with the VR's generally happens with the field office. You know, other than the point that when we become aware that it's a 301 case; we are also going to let the cost reimburse. Coordinators know that it is but by that time somebody else in the VR should have already been aware of it from the field office at the time the determination is made.

Before we open this up for question and answer, I want to go over a couple of things from the claims stand point then we'll take questions on both the actual SSA part of the process and the cost reimbursement claims part of it at the same time.

A person's 301 eligibility ends when one of three things happens: they stop participating in the program, they complete the program, which for VR purposes basically means case closure, or SSA determines continued participation will not increase the likelihood they are not going to return to the rolls and that could happen as a result of one of the diaries or just a person's failure to continue to make progress.

At the end FTD301 process there are several things I'd like you to remember about filing cost reimbursement claims. First off you cannot be paid for a regular SGA based claim and a 301 claim for the same period of the VR there is no requirement for 9 months of SGA earnings in 301 cases, so if you are aware of a 301 case you don't have to sit there and track the earnings and wait to get 9 months and file the claim, the earnings are not pertinent on a 301 case.

Payment period on a 301 case ends the month before benefits terminate or 301 eligibility ends. Claims cannot be paid on a 301 case until the benefits are actually terminated. So there could be a lag period between when a case gets closed and SSA processes the case termination. We can't pay until the case is actually terminated. And cost reimbursement on a 301 claim must be filed within 12 months of case closure. So again it has nothing to do with the 9th month of SGA or anything like that, the key date that starts that clock ticking is when you close the case and you have 12 months from that point to file the claim.

I'm going to ask all of you or encourage all of you to make sure to check the correct box on the front of the 199 to indicate that it is actually a 301 case and not a regular case that would certainly help our processing here. If it's not checked it's entirely possible that



somebody might not pick up on the fact it's a 301 and deny it because there aren't sufficient earnings or for some other reason or not pay it correctly.

That's all the particular claims things i can think of unless anybody else in the room has something.

Operator: At this point i think we can go ahead and open it up for questions. If you'd like to ask audio question, press star 1 on your telephone key pad. Please hold for your first question you have a question from the line of Eugenia

Eugenia: I heard somebody laughing back there.

SSA: Hi, Eugenia

Eugenia: Hello. This is a question we've been asking for years and years and years.

SSA: Okay, what's the question?

Eugenia: The question is most of us don't have a clue how we learn about the section 301 cases. I've heard that California used to periodically get a list from somebody, I don't know who that came from. How do we know we have one since all the things that were just explained are all done behind the scenes. Unless a beneficiary comes to us and says, hey, i got a letter about being denied for a 301 we have no clue when and where there is one.

Well, if they tell you they are denied for it obviously they are not one, but as I just said, somebody in the VR should have gotten a notice from the field office. I don't know where they go and it could vary from VR to VR who is getting those, but again the important thing is I think to help nail that down from the claims perspective, we are going to send an email with a copy of the, basically the determination scanned and attached to it to the claims coordinator in each VR when we receive the determination. So at least going forward you should be aware of every one that's coming through the pipeline at this point.

Okay. And so at some point in time because everything was done behind the scenes, our work incentive network developed two handouts that we sent to you guys before. One of the handouts to give guidance to the VR counselor and one is the handout to hand out to the beneficiary so they know what to do if they even hear about what a section 301 is. Because it's all done behind the scenes, we wanted to give some guidance on what was happening. We have sent them to you. This is something that's been in the dark for us for so long, we wanted to get something out there to



field staff to even know that this exists and to make it very clear that everything had to have happened with a section 301 while they were in a plan. And we wanted the beneficiary to know this is a potential if they go into a medical cessation. So we do have those and we do have those available if anybody wants them but, again, it's good to know that you are going to let us know when there is one because we have not a clue and I believe in the chat that somebody said that their field office doesn't even know what a section 301 is.

So there's so much miscommunication on this and we have never filed on one, we've never been notified and I've been doing this, what, 7 or 8 years? So again I'm hoping that we get something, I know there's got to be some out there.

I can't speak to the number that is out there. We have no means of compiling a list or anything like that, but we don't see that many either so I don't think you can expect to see a ton of these. But again we're trying to tighten that process up. I think it's great that you have something for the counselor to give them.

We have one for the counselor and we have one for the beneficiary.

The information is in the red book, the information that SSA has out there, but a separate pamphlet and the counselors being aware of it would obviously help allay any apprehension on the customers' part.

And then the other question with regards to claims, so let's say we served in person 3 times in the past but then the last time we served them they went into medical says session and they went into a section 301. Now, we can file that claim for section 301 which doesn't involve 9 months of SGA, but let's say they do reach 9 months of SGA later, can we file a claim on the first two periods of service?

SSA:

If it's a separate period of VR, yes.

They can be SGA claims and a section 301.

On the same beneficiary. Of course, you know, you would have to be able to make sure to show the connectivity between the earlier periods of VR

Eugenia:

Yeah.

But that's fine.

Okay, thank you.



SSA: Take care.

Operator: Your next question is from the line of David Leon.

David Leon: my question is around the submitting of that 301 claim. The first one I had, and I did get a letter about it, it was fantastic, easy to work on, but I went ahead and checked every other month because I was under the impression I had one year from when SSA decided their benefits ended whether or not they had finished a program. And I want to be clear that with a 301 case I actually have 12 months from the month they end our program.

SSA: Yeah, the closure determines, you know, the start of the clock but I'm trying to figure out, I guess there would be cases where SSA would have gone ahead and terminated benefits for some other reason than closing the case, presumably either they determined it wasn't likely to do it or something else may have happened. No, you still have 12 months from when you close a case to file the claim, it's just the payment period will have already stopped back when SSA terminated the benefits.

David Leon: Okay, that makes sense.

SSA: It's complicated but it does make sense. Anything else David

David Leon: No, that was it. The other thing we are try to go do in Virginia is working with our transition counselors and having them leave information in the local schools. There's an SSA document that clients can fill out to support their need for 301 protection, I don't remember what that is, but we're trying to get that in as many places as we can.

SSA: Yeah, again, it's not something that comes up that often and it's hard to keep everybody knowledgeable about it, given staff turnover and everything, but anything you can come up with to get that information out there is helpful.

Next question, operator.

Operator: Your next question comes from the line of Dana Hunt.

Dana Hunt: Hi, how are you guys?

SSA: Hi, dana

Dana Hunt: Good. So the two questions I have that often come up when I'm training staff about 301, and by the way I asked about a notification once that I did get but my question is does the beneficiary get to keep their medical benefits during the 301, that's a question I often get, I know they get to keep payments but I was not sure about medical.

Two, there is no harm if being older benefits are going to cease because they failed a CDR to point out to the office that they are working with VR and asking if they would qualify for 301?

SSA: Dana, I missed the last part of that question. Can you go over that again?

Dana Hunt: Sure, so you have a beneficiary that they fail the CDR or they know they're not going to be, they went through the SSI redetermination and did not pass but they've been working with VR, I know that social security in theory will pick up the potential 301 cases, but can the consumers also go and ask, hey, am I eligible for 301?

SSA: Absolutely. I imagine there could be circumstances where SSA would miss it in some case. I don't think it's very likely, but it would never, there's never any harm in the customer or their representative saying, gee, i think this person should be entitled to it, did we miss something, and check it out.

Dana Hunt: Okay. Then do you know be if they get medical benefits while on 301?

SSA: You know, i can't imagine -- it's not something i'm really that knowledgeable about, but if their benefits continue i'm pretty sure that either medical assistance for ssi or medicare for title ii would still stay in effect until the cessation is actually processed.

Dana Hunt: Okay, that was my questions. Thank you.

SSA: Take care.

Operator: As a reminder, to ask a question, press star 1. Your next question is from the line of Mike Hermanson.

Mike Hermanson: This is Mike Hermanson in Montana. Just wanted to say actually i think it's working pretty smoothly in Montana. I get about 7 or 8 forms from the disability determination unit every month in terms of VR participation and they have had me go down and not do training so if you are wondering about getting the participation parts maybe you should talk to your DDU supervisor and maybe they will let you do some training on the staff and basically here, one, there's a place where the consumer can check that they are participating in VR, but the claims people here, they kind of look in terms of the documentation that they review if they see anything that makes up, that looks like the person is seeing a VR counselor they send me a form. So it's working pretty well here and we get one, maybe two 301 cases a year and they process real smoothly. They are slow but they all process. That's all I've got. Thank you.

SSA: Thanks, mike.



Nate Arnold: Any more questions, operator ?

Operator: At this time there are no further audio questions.

Nate Arnold: Okay, with that i want to once again thank our friends over are in office of disability operations for the presentation and for being here as a technical resource and we'll mouf to the rest of the agenda, general announcements and VR I'm going to turn over to Danielle Armstrong.

Danielle Armstrong: A lot of your questions are for the field office, we didn't have any field office representation on the line today but we have written down questions from the chat and will make sure we get answers to those and make sure we get those out to everybody as well.

The two updates i have, one, i wanted to give everybody an update on the vr handbook. It is actually completed and being reviewed by the analyst and analyst staff so that should be completed shortly.

The handbook should come once we release it to you. What we've done with the handbook is make sure beef all the rules and regulations in. We wouldn't really use your input since we are the creator of the actual rule and rel glacial. When we do release that we do want to hear like cbec if it's clear. Hopefully we will have it completed in the next 30 days so i wanted to give an update on that.

The second thing has to do with the pending claim list and our transition to itops.

What you will notice is coming up sooner than later i will give you more information as we get it, but this is just kind of a heads up. You are going to see a lag, a discrepancy in your pending claims list. With the transition in order for them to convert all of the data and all of the claims over to the new itops system, you are going to see that lag. It shouldn't be a long time frame, we'll have, like i said, more information on that to come, but i wanted to give you a heads up on that because we recently spent a lot of time getting the pending claims list up to date.

The good thing is once that's completed and sfrg in of course you know you will have the claim upload at the push of a button, so once you do that you will be able to see every claim there. You are not going to have the mail issue, you are not going to have a leg, what you see will be what we see. Again, more information on that and come, it may come to a point where, depending to how many you have to submit you may hold on to some until it's time to put in the file, but as we get more information we'll definitely get that to you. I just wanted to let everybody know that was what was com-

ing. We just found that out from system that there's going to be that lag so before you start to see it, i wanted to let you know and again you will hear more on that, you will probably hear a lot from raquel, but in the long run when it's all said and done, ough issues you have seen with discrepancies with the list, discrepancies with the mail will be eliminated. That's kind of what we have to look forward to.

We did get an inquiry about having a separate call for vr en's. What i'm going to ask, because we only got one question for that, if you have any desire for that we want you to send that in to the help desk, send in that you would be interested in a separate call for vr en's and if you would what you feel is pertinent topics for you to discuss. We don't want to implement another call if it's not going to be beneficial to you all.

Those are the only updates that i had. Going to turn it over to Raquel Donaldson who most of you speak to on the help desk for payment updates.

Raquel Donaldson:

good afternoon, everyone, this is raquel i wanted to thank everyone, you are aware i am sending out monthly any suggestions with regards to this call. I want to thank everyone who takes the topics of issues and topics to me.

Also there are times when we have repeated issues or tauchics, i'm actually going to have a place on the chat line the email address or the been site where we post all of the notes from all the past vr dolls so when you send me an issue and i know we've talked about it, i'm going to refer you to the web site so you have all the information available to your fingertips. If you are -- pass it on to Katie Striebinger.

Katie Striebinger:

the first note is about the portal and the upcoming changes to the portal. Cost reimburse. Claims processing will be added to the portal this fall. Every vr agencies that is enrolled in the portal will be able to submit claims to the portal when the new functionality goes live. We plan to pilot some of the new functionality so everything is working properly. The pilot is not going to begin until October as we have not selected any vr's for testing yet. I will have more information next call so stay tuned to that. It is a little far out to be picking things for the pilot.

I want to let you know for those of you on burning questions on timely credit reviews, Alissa Ness will be the speaker on the august vr call. You can submit questions to the vr help desk and we can make sure Alissa gets to those so we can be sure you get the answers on the transcript. She will be going through tpr and overview



and tpr training. This will not portal specific training, this is just basics, how it works, how it's going to work, when it goes live. That's all i have, i will send you back to Raquel

Raquel Donaldson: At this time we're going to be the operator open the lines to anything.

Operator: As a reminder, to ask a question, press star 1. Please hold for your first question . We have a question from the line of Dawn Duvall

Dawn Duvall: Good afternoon, everybody frx this is dawn.
My question is to SSA, is there some way to get a list of 301 cases at all?

SSA: WI, based on the way they explained the process to you, we don't have a list of the cases. So as they receive the information and they notify us, we would notify you.

Now one thing i will suggest to everybody because the field offices are notifying somebody in the vr, it may be worth trying to find out who in your agency is receiving that notification. Like we said, on our end what we're going to do once we receive it is send it out to the coordinator so we know it's getting to the contact we know is going to get it to you guys. As of right now that's the best we can offer.

Like i said, i have taken down all of the questions for the field office and what we're going to do is reach out to our counterpart and deal with the field office to find out there is nilg else we can do, to find out, i think one person said they were thrilled. We are going to get some information to make everything clearer but if you can find out who is receiving the notification at the vr, that will be a big help.

Dawn Duvall: how will i find out? I am the only one who dez that program in the state so i don't know who else would be receiving the information. How do i find out who they are sending the information to?

SSA: Two things. One, you can reach out to one of your local field office and see if they can point you in the right direction. You can also reach out to the regional coordinator because i would think they would have an idea. Again, because that's on the field office and we don't have a lot of guidance but we're going to find out what we can so we can get you more information, but right now that's really all you have.

Dawn Duvall: When you say local field office you mean the local dds office?

SSA: The way we explained it's going to the field office, like local social security field office. I would probably start there but again we're not really sure what the process is was they get it. We're going to try

to find it out but that's as much as we know right now, what we received from the office of disability operations.

In most cases i don't think the dds would be aware it was truly a 301. If the field office knows that they point at which it goes to dds for a cdr, they may have annotated it as a potential 301 case but it doesn't become 301 until odo makes that determination.

Sent to the local social security office.

Right. The beneficiary obviously gets a determination of the determination and i believe the local office does. They should be notifying you.

Going forward, we are going to send you these emails and obviously over time we will have a data base over what's pending. Gee, dawn, we know you have this many cases.

You only have 12 months once the case closes and i have only had one in 12 years. It sounds like some states are getting 2 or 3 a month.

I would be surprised if the volume is that high but, again, there shouldn't be that many. Once we went to electronic case openings and closures i really think that prevented a lot of 301 cases. I think the majority you see now are probably the age 18 determinations and tpr failures.

Dawn Duvall:

Okay. All right, thank you, appreciate it.

Operator:

Your next question is from the line of eugenia cox.

Eugenia Cox:

I have asked a couple of the branch ssa field offices if they have or if they notify social security of section 301 and i got the same response that some of the other states got, they have no clue what i'm talking about. Again, even though mike has a good relationship with his, i'm assuming dds is telling him these things and notifying him, i with like to know hoo the actual person would be that would be responsible to that so i can get in touch with them to find out because, really, like dawn, there is nobody else in our office getting these notifications, and if they did, they would be forwarding them to me. We're very level on the management side.

Again, i have no clue, maybe a step by step if you guys could do an outline to let us know, if you don't hear anything go to this person or contact this -- it doesn't have to be a name, it would be just a position of somebody responsible to that, whether it be in the ssa field office or the dda field office.

My other question is it's with regard to the porlgts, i am having, and i haven't heard back from Katie or anybody else with regard to this,



but i am able to put people into in use status but when i try to put them into ticket assignment status it says they are not in current pay status. And that shouldn't be happening.

Katie:

This is Katie. You sent me one simple, they are looking into the one. It does help that i'm to have morn one examples. If you have more SSA's will you please send them? ?Oo ?a for me it does not -- it only happens when i go to try to change an in use status person into a ticket. Again, i make the assumption that the system is only allowing the person to go in use if they are in current pay and since we will not address, demand, we are seeing 900 people in current use and we assume that's correct.

Every time you get that arrow you need 20 send it to me because i gave it to the system and i have one ssn out of the thousands that process every month. So if you have more examples you need to send them up.

I only find out when i try to convent them. The more examples you have of finding out what's going on.

It's happened before when i go to file a cost reimbursement claim and it shows the ticket was put in use, but then you tell me at the weren't in pay status when they try to deny the claim.

We can't track down a box process that happened before the portal opened but if you have cases in the last year, the recent cases, cases on the portal, that's the kind of stuff i need. It's a gigantic case back trying to figure out the code. I knee recent cases they can stick in the portal.

Operator:

At this time there are no further audio questions.

Nate Arnold:

All right, we're going to thank everybody for joining us for the call. I have one last reminder item. Next week i believe it's on wepb, there will be a wise seminar on youth transition, tips for transitioning from school to employment and work in17 -- incentives to check that out, i think you can register at choose work.net. I know there's a phone number also if you can't find that let us know, we'll hook you up with it or we'll put it in the minutes.

Thanks again, we'll see you on next month's call.

And next month's call is tuesday, july 12, at 3:00.

Operator:

This concludes today's present tais. Thank you for joining. We ask that you please disconnect your line.

END OF CALL

